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BRITISH CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING TEXAS

XXIII

EDITED BY EPHRAIM DOUGLASS ADAMS

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN¹

No 32

New York.

December 14th. 1845

My Lord,

I have the honour to acquaint Your Lordship that the Constitution of the proposed State of Texas has been forwarded by the Government of that Country to the United States by a special Messenger.

The expectation was generally entertained that there it would be adopted before this Christmas recess. Your Lordship will have better means of judging of the accuracy of that impression than I can furnish, and of all other considerations affecting the progress or final disposal of the Measure by the Legislature of the United States.

Charles Elliot

To The Right Honourable

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN²

Private.

New York,

Decr. 14th 1845

My Lord,

I take the liberty to forward Your Lordship the copy of a private letter which I have recently received from Colonel George Hockley of Texas. This Gentleman, who is a person of honour and character, was Secretary of War during considerable part of General Houston's second Administration, and like his friend Mr. Terrell, has always been the steady opponent of Annexation, speaking and voting against it in every phase and stage of the transaction.

¹F. O. Texas, Vol. 13.

²F. O. Texas, Vol. 14.

May I hope Your Lordship will suffer my Agent in the Foreign Office, Mr Conyngham, to forward me any information which the Consul General in Guatemala may have furnished respecting the Colonization project noticed by Colonel Hockley

I shall of course be careful not to mention the source from which this information comes, or in any way to commit Her Majesty's Government. But I think Your Lordship will desire to do any thing which can be done properly in furtherance of the wishes of Gentlemen who have always steadfastly and honorably adhered to their pledges, direct and implied, to sustain the separate existence and independence of Texas.

I have mentioned to Mr Conyngham that I have had the honour to address Your Lordship privately on a subject to which I would ask his kind attention, if Your Lordship should see fit to place this letter in his hands and permit him to furnish the information sought. I should also add that I have thought it proper not to apply to any other source either in England or in Guatemala, in case Your Lordship should disapprove of any step being taken in the matter.

In concluding these few lines I would wish to state my impression formed both upon personal observation, and reliable information, that the party in Texas adverse to Annexation is respectable both in point of numbers and character, and there seems no want of reason to think that the time may come, (perhaps at no very remote period,) when it would be well that the leaders of that party should have some ground for believing that their right conduct and steadiness had not been lost upon the friends of the Independence of Texas.

Charles Elliot

To The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

HOCKLEY TO ELLIOT³

[Enclosure]

Copy.

Charles Elliot

Dear Sir,

Galveston

14th. Novr. 1845.

In conjunction with a few of my friends I have it in contemplation to decline any participation in the honors and ad-

³F. O. Texas, Vol. 14.

vantages consequent upon the Annexation of Texas to the United States, and have turned over attention to a new Colonization, and are desirous of some information relative to the Eastern Coasts of Central America. I am informed that a Company of British Capitalists was formed, probably about the latter end of the year 1839 for the purpose of Colonizing at Guatamala, but cannot trace it's progress, or ascertain the fact of any having been made.

I hope that you will excuse the trouble I give in making this hasty request (the boat is leaving, and I have but now obtained your address) that you will give me such information as may be of service relating to this matter, at as early a period as convenient. I presume about 8 or 9 hundred families, or more, can be enlisted in this enterprize, *and some names given to you* with which you have been familiar and *acted with*, whilst in Texas, in case we see a probability of success. Meanwhile we wish the matter to be kept profoundly secret, so far as it can be done. The Company alluded to was styled the Eastern Coast and "Central America Commercial and Agricultural Company." The Directors were P. H. Abbot Esqr. Capt P. H. Bingham, R. N, Charles Bourjet Esqr, John Darrow. Esqr, Wm Hood Esqr., Adam Murray, Esqr, John Spurgin Esqr, M. D., David Pollock, Esqr. I regret that the departure of the Steamer forces me to the abrupt conclusion with which I subscribe myself.

Geo. Wm Hockley

To Captain Charles Elliot.

[Endorsed.] Capt Elliot's Priv. Decr 14. 1845

KENNEDY TO ABERDEEN⁴

No. 36.

Her Majesty's Consulate
Galveston,
December 20th 1845.

My Lord,

In a letter written by General Andrew Jackson, and published some months before his death, he observed—(on behalf of the American people)—“We want Texas because we want California.”—The Ex-President might have added,—“And we want

⁴F. O. Texas, Vol. 14.

California because we desire to obtain Maritime ascendancy in the Pacific, with the advantages consequent on an easy and comparatively speedy communication with India and China.

An Extract (which I have the honor to enclose) from a Despatch addressed by Mr. Forsyth,⁵ Secretary of State of the United States, to Mr. Butler, American Charge d'Affaires in Mexico, shows that, in the year 1835, Texas and California were associated as desirable acquisitions, in the policy of President Jackson's administration.⁶

An Extract (also enclosed herewith) from a Speech delivered at St Louis, Missouri, on the 14th October 1844, by Colonel Thos. H. Benton, a Member of the Senate of the United States, shows that the idea of securing an ascendancy in the trade with India and China, by means of Settlements on the North West Coast of America, is not new to the minds of American Statesmen.

The United States have ceased to affect any disguise as to their determination to possess themselves of Upper California, and their ingenuity is actively employed in planning railway and other lines of communication across the Continent, in order that "a new route, almost exclusively American," may thereby be "opened to Asiatic Commerce."

It may be inferred from the pertinacity displayed by American Statesmen in regard to the acquisition of Texas, that they are not likely to abandon any project which may promise an increase of the elements of National power. Such a project may be masked—or it may be allowed to slumber for a time—but it will not be lost sight of—much less abandoned.

Intoxicated by the acquisition of Texas (the Key-stone of the North American System)—an acquisition made with an ease that astonished even themselves, the United States have allowed

⁵John Forsyth, b. 1780, d. 1841, a leading politician of Georgia, holding various State offices, and serving in Congress in both House and Senate, 1813-1819. In 1819 he went to Spain as Minister and negotiated the Florida treaty. He was again prominent in State and national politics, 1823-1834, but in the latter year resigned from the Senate to become Jackson's secretary of state, and held the post under Van Buren also until March, 1841. (Appleton, *Cyclop. of Am. Biography*.)

⁶Forsyth to Butler, August 6, 1835, in which Butler was instructed to purchase, if possible, a portion of California to include San Francisco Bay, but not to seek to acquire Monterey. (In U. S. Docs., Ser. No. 311, Doc. 42, p. 18.)

free scope to the spirit of bold disclosure concerning schemes of prospective aggrandizement. Among their leading politicians, no one pretends to doubt that the Northern Confederacy is destined, and at no remote day, to be the ruling Power of the world—giving to other States the impress of Republican institutions

But of their politicians,—even of the class, professing the most rigid principles of democracy, there are two divisions.—one of which is for immediate extension of territory, regardless of consequences,—the other for what is termed a “masterly inactivity”—that is trusting to the helping influences of time. In risking a collision with old Sovereignities, the former hope for success through the sympathies of kindred opinion—in procrastinating cherished Measures, the latter calculate that a few years will bring within their reach, without cost and without danger, what they—more cautious, or more experienced, or better informed than their fellows—feel and fear, if precipitately snatched at, would be productive of both. The stationary condition of Europe and the rapid progress of the Union are the stimulating topics with the first democratic Section; the concentrated energy of Monarchies, the Military strength of European Sovereignities, and the certainty of an early and vast addition to the already large resources of America, are the prudential pleas of the second.—“We defeated Great Britain when our population was only three Millions, and we are now more than twenty”—say the advocates of instant action—“Be patient, and at peace, for one quarter of a Century”—reply the friends of delay—“and you will have a combination of agricultural, commercial and manufacturing wealth with numerical force, capable of commanding the first place among the Nations. The short term of five and twenty years, with no addition to the ordinary ratio of increase, will exhibit the United States with fifty Millions of inhabitants. Of felicitous events—such as wars between the great European Powers—we shall do well to avail ourselves—but let us avoid a premature expenditure of our resources. By pursuing this policy, Mexico, the West India islands, the trade of China and Hindostan, will, all in good time be our own”

This, My Lord, I believe to be a faithful though brief, tran-

script of opinion now ascendant in the United States. I by no means assume that either the facts referred to, or the views indicated, will be in the least degree novel to Your Lordship. I take leave to submit them because my opportunities of observation have been good—and because I entertain the conviction that these facts and these views can hardly be too frequent a subject of reflection to the Statesmen who at present administer the affairs of the British Empire.

William Kennedy.

The Earl of Aberdeen K. T.

[Enclosure].

Extract from a Speech delivered at St Louis, Missouri, by Colonel Thos. H. Benton, Senator from Missouri to the United States Congress, on the 14th of October, 1844.⁷

— “In the year 1818, a Treaty was made to admit the British to a Joint occupation of the Columbia river, and another to cede the South Western part of Louisiana to the King of Spain. A Southern President, and a Southern Cabinet—a Democratic administration and a Southern administration made those Treaties. The Senate ratified them unanimously. The Newspaper Press saluted them with universal applause. The whole Country applauded them. Solitary and alone I denounced them. From the banks of the Mississippi, and from the station of a private Citizen, I denounced those Treaties in which all others concurred. And now I have the voice of a Nation repeating the self-same reasons for getting rid of those Treaties which I gave then for not making them, and recounting, as matter of history, the evils which I then foretold.

“Of the joint occupation Treaty, I then said—it was one sided and partial, yielding our territory, our river and our sea-port to the British, and getting nothing from them in return: that they would kill and expel our fur-traders—occupy and fortify the Country—set up a claim to the whole of it—and either fight us for it,—or offer to compromise by dividing our Country into two unequal parts, and taking the lion’s share to themselves. This is what I then said, and what the event now proves. And I then proposed the termination of all that policy by putting an end to

⁷F. O. Texas, Vol. 14.

the Treaty; and I urged the preservation of our own rights on the Oregon by Colonizing the Country and giving land to the emigrants. These are the Measures I recommended twenty-five years ago, and which are now pursued in relation to Oregon, and they have my cordial support. To put an end to the Treaty of Joint occupation, and to give land to the emigrants, is now the national policy, and the way to carry the Baltimore resolutions into effect.

“And I went further in my views upon Oregon than the exclusion of the British, and the preservation of our territorial rights. I looked across the Pacific Ocean, and I saw Eastern Asia full in sight. I traced an American Road to India* through our own dominions, and across that Sea!—I showed that a new route, almost exclusively American, was to be opened to Asiatic Commerce, and although the event has not yet fulfilled my expectations, nor the public mind advanced to my position, yet I still stand upon it and adhere to my vision of five and twenty years ago. I repeat again what I then said: I say the man is alive, full-grown, and listening to what I say (without believing it, perhaps) who will yet see the Asiatic Commerce traversing the North Pacific Ocean, entering the Oregon river, climbing the Western Slope of the Rocky Mountains, issuing from its gorges, and spreading its fertilizing streams over our widely extended Union!—The Steam-boat and the Steam-car have not yet exhausted their wonders. They have not yet found even their amplest and most appropriate theatres—the tranquil surface of the North Pacific Ocean, and the vast inclined plane which spreads East and West from the base of the Rocky Mountains. The magic boat and the flying car are not yet seen upon this ocean, nor upon this plane—but they will be seen there;—and St Louis, in Missouri, is yet to find herself as near to Canton as she now is to London—with a better and safer route, by land and sea, to China and Japan than she now has to France and Great Britain.”

*AMERICAN ROAD TO INDIA:—These words are in small capitals in the published Speech, which, I should suppose, had received the revision of Mr Benton himself, as it was printed, in

a pamphlet form,⁸ at St. Louis Missouri, from which place I obtained the copy now in my possession. W. K.

[Endorsed.] Enclosure No. 2. In Mr Consul Kennedy's Despatch No dated December. 1845

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN⁹

No. 34.¹⁰

Decr. 24th. 1845.

My Lord,

On my way through Washington yesterday where I had the pleasure of some conversation with Mr Pakenham, I learnt that the resolutions annexing Texas to the United States had passed both Houses of Congress, and been approved by the President.

In pursuance to Your Lordship's instructions of the 3rd Instant, however, I am proceeding by Mail to Texas, and avail myself of an accidental delay at this point, to mention that the Messenger of that Government who brought on the Constitution of the new State, and is to take back it's adoption, is still detained at Washington.

Accident apart, therefore, I shall reach Texas in time to make the communication directed by Your Lordship in the despatch No 17, before the extinction of the Government of the Republic.

Charles Elliot

To The Right Honourable

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

KENNEDY TO ABERDEEN¹¹

No. 38.

Her Majesty's Consulate

Galveston December 31st 1845

My Lord,

I have the honor to transmit a Return of the Number of German Emigrants that arrived at Galveston during the year about to close, with the Names of the Ships in which they were con-

⁸This pamphlet is not generally available.

⁹F. O. Texas, Vol. 13.

¹⁰F. O. Texas, 13, Elliot to Aberdeen, No. 33, December 21, 1845, acknowledging receipt of despatches, has been omitted.

¹¹F. O. Texas, Vol. 14.

veyed, the Nations to which said ships belonged, and the Ports from which they Sailed.

The European emigration to Texas during 1845, has, with slight exception been exclusively German.

William Kennedy.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

[Enclosure.]

Return of the Number of German Emigrants that have arrived at the Port of Galveston from the 1st of January 1845 to the 31st of December of the same year, with the names of the Ships in which they were conveyed, the Nations to which said Vessels belonged, and the Ports from which they sailed.

Ship.	Nation	From	Number of Emigrants
Brig Johann Dethard.	Bremen	Bremen	120
“ Ferdinand	“	“	125
“ Herschel.	“	“	135
“ Arminius	“	“	125
“ Garonne	“	“	136
“ George Delcius	“	“	136
“ Margaretha	“	“	125
“ Auguste & Meline	“	“	147.
“ Weser	“	“	97.
“ Johann Dethard	“	“	130
Ship Everhard.	“	“	280
Barque Neptune	“	“	214
“ Hercules	“	“	164
“ B. Bohlen	“	“	184.
“ Matador	Hanoverian	“	140
Schooner Gerona	Hanoverian	“	87.
Barque Harriet	Belgian	Antwerp	183
Brig. Alberdina	Oldenburg.	“	77.
Ship Washington	American	“	185
Barque Strabo	“	“	169.
“ Sarah Anne	“	“	125

Total number of German Emigrants 3084

[Endorsed] In Mr Consul Kennedy's despatch No 38. dated December 31st 1845.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN¹²No. 2.¹³

New Orleans.

Jany. 5. 1846.

My Lord.

I have the honour to acquaint Your Lordship that I arrived here yesterday morning, a few hours before the departure of a Steam boat for Galveston. Indisposition arising from the exhaustion of a long journey at this inclement season of the year, prevented me from availing myself of that opportunity: But observing in the Newspapers that the President of the United States had already signed the Annexation resolutions, and forwarded them to Texas by a Messenger, I deemed it suitable to lose no time in placing the Government of the Republic in possession of the Copy of Your Lordship's Despatch No 17 of last year. It was therefore transmitted to the Secretary of State by yesterday's boat, with the accompanying Note.¹⁴ I proceed to Texas in pursuance of Your Lordship's Instructions on the 8th Instant.

Charles Elliot

To The Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN¹⁵

No. 3.

New Orleans.

Jany. 8th. 1846.

My Lord,

The delay of a day in the departure of the Steam boat by which I proceed to Texas enables me to forward to Your Lordship a noticeable letter extracted from a newspaper of this City.¹⁶

There may be some exaggeration in this account of the state of the force in Texas, but I have also heard from reliable sources that it is very unsatisfactory. The fact is that it is in a wrong

¹²F. O. Texas, Vol. 16.¹³F. O. Texas, 16, Elliot to Aberdeen, No. 1, January 5, 1846, has been omitted. It stated reasons for being unable at present to furnish a detailed list of his correspondence.¹⁴Elliot to Allen, January 4, 1846. (In Garrison, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Republic of Texas*, III, 1203, in *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1908, II.)¹⁵F. O. Texas, Vol. 16.¹⁶Unidentified newspaper cutting.

position militarily considered. It should have been cantoned in the neighbourhood of San Antonio which is comparatively healthy, and where there is abundance of good water and forage. That point also covers the main routes into the Country, and owing to the rolling nature of it there, the force and their Material could always be moved in any direction that was necessary— on the Coast they are either in a swamp, for rain of any consequence renders the Country almost impracticable, or there is a drought with a total want of good water and forage. It was only necessary to hold Corpus Christi, or the nearest best water harbour to the Cantonment of the force with two or three light draught Gun boats, and a small armed steamer, I have long felt satisfied from my experience in this Country that the Americans are better fitted for the acquisition of territory by quiet encroachment than by military operations.

The Officers are almost universally excellent and high spirited, but the Government knows nothing of the care or management of the troops, or the mode of elevating their morals. They are for the most part foreigners too, or not of the good classes of native Citizens, and have necessarily not much pride in their profession. If Mexico were in the situation that it was ten years since I believe that this small force would have been effectually broken to pieces long ago. It was certainly assembled in an extremely confused and incomplete manner, and I am sure has been improperly posted since

Charles Elliot

To The Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN¹⁷

Separate.

New Orleans.

January 8th, 1846.

My Lord,

I beg leave to transmit to Your Lordship an extract from the New York Herald Newspaper of the 22d Ultimo.¹⁸

¹⁷F. O. Texas, Vol. 16.

¹⁸The cutting enclosed is dated December 25, 1845.

The pretext for Mr Buchanan's¹⁹ censures was the concealment of the place of my destination when I left Texas in April last, but it may be that the success of my visit to Mexico is the foundation of this irritation. For Mr Buchanan possibly understands that when the popular intoxication has subsided in Texas there may be bitter repinings at the great sacrifice into which the people have been deluded and hurried, and indignation against the acts and devices and motives of the parties by whom, and for whose advantage, the act of excessive folly has been brought about.

Suffer me to remind Your Lordship that the two events of the dispositions of the Mexican Government towards accommodation on the basis of the independence of Texas, and the earnest desire of Her Majesty's Government that these dispositions should be met in a corresponding spirit by the Government of Texas, became known to me within a few days of each other at the end of March last. It had happened that just before that period, with the Annexation resolutions passed in the United States, and a party in power there, deeply committed to the Measure, I had considered that I could be of no further use on the spot for the present, and was in the intention of going to Charleston to meet my family. These intentions were generally known at Galveston when the Electra arrived,—but then followed the change of circumstances that led to my visit to Mexico.

The concealment of the place of my destination till something definite could be procured from Mexico, and laid before the public of Texas, was indispensably necessary to protect that Government against the indirect practices and proceedings to which they were exposed. No person was better aware of their situation in that respect than myself, and feeling that it was incumbent upon me in the spirit of my instructions, to second their wise and sincere desire to secure to the people of Texas a choice between independence on honourable terms, and the rash sacrifice of their Nationality, I adopted the course which has brought upon me the reprehension of a Gentleman of Mr. Buchanan's claims to direct and disinterested public conduct, and ingenuous political correspondence.

It was the last chance that was left of preventing serious public

¹⁹Buchanan was at this time secretary of state in Polk's cabinet.

mischief, fraught with consequences of the worst description to all parties concerned, and I felt that I ought not to reject it for the sake of avoiding the blame which I knew would be cast upon me in the highly probable contingency that has occurred.

Mr Buchanan's strictures do not affect me, for emulating the plainness with which he has spoken of me in papers that have found their way before the public, I must really say that in my estimation he is no more than the player of a chief part in an unprincipled public juggle, a plot for the spoliation of an unoffending and weak neighbour, brought to pass mainly by the betrayal of certain politicians of their friends and leaders for no higher detectable interests than their own, and those of land and stock jobbers, and internal Slave trade dealers; a passage, in fine, in that systematic practice of delusion and excitement upon the unreflecting masses of the American people, made drunk with wordy and senseless projects of aggrandizement, and whooped on to clamour for measures alike injurious to the honour and well understood interests of their Country.

Few persons, My Lord, can be better acquainted than myself with the history of the Annexation of Texas, from its origin to its accomplishment; and there is no confusion in my understanding between the influences and means which have compassed it, and the reluctant consent of eminent persons of both the great parties in the Country who have recently voted for it, in a sense, no doubt, that further opposition was unavailing, and would only serve to drive them into private life, at a moment when there is so much need for their efforts to avert worse mischief.

It cannot be justly imputed to me, if these papers should ever be submitted to the public, that I am making a general and unfounded attack upon the American people and their institutions. Nothing can be farther from my dispositions and intentions. I have lived more in America than in Europe for the last 30 years of my life, I have as many friends here as there; I have the firmest belief in the suitableness of their institutions as they were originally framed to the circumstances of the case, and to the fitness of those people for such institutions, and I know that there are as many reasonable and honourable persons in the United States as in any other part of the world, proportionably to the population

But it is unhappily equally true that if there were many times more; the course of public events would not be materially altered, for there is a great preponderance of ignorance, prejudice, and rashness, not only in the body of the people, but in the councils of the Nation, sinking more and more palpably to a very low level, by the rapidly deteriorating operation of universal suffrage. I am as sensible as any American can be, that this painful result does not spring from the original principle of their institutions, which was sound, but I believe that some of the most profound thinkers in America, have traced it to the revolutionary change from a representative to a pure democracy; a form of things that experience has shewn to be unstable, incompatible with peace, true freedom, and the elevation of the character of man; ever leading on the contrary, to the curse of military despotism as an escape from grovelling, and usually blood stained mob tyranny, knave incited.

Persons of high principle and independent conduct find their way less and less into public life in the United States, and it would be a libel to say that the public character of the present Government and Legislature afford fair average means of estimating the amount of public spirit, wisdom, and purity, in the Country. The real standard is much higher than that, but the voice of moderation and wisdom is silenced or borne down by the force of circumstances. These ultra democratic institutions, and the egregious flattery lavished on the people, have also had the effect of stamping a character of excessive exciteability and vanity upon the masses, making them ready instruments in the hands of adroit and reckless demagogues, always striving to over reach each other in practices upon the passions of the multitude. Some of the persons for example in high office to day, are supposed to have been sincerely opposed to the Annexation of Texas, but they nevertheless, in the phraseology of the Country, went in freely for it, as soon as it was clamoured up to be popular, for the sake of what must rather be called tripping up—than defeating, not merely their political opponents, but their avowed friends and leaders, and by this time there are persons of note in the Legislature, of the same party as themselves, striving as hard to out bid and out manoeuvre them.

Wrongful motives and intrigue have been imputed to the Governments of Great Britain and France and their Agents, in the affairs of Texas; with a force of assurance, which is certainly without parallel in the past, howsoever promising the future may be. There was indeed a profession of such motives and conduct in these affairs, but the whole world knows from whence it came, and in that strife of personal rivalry and unscrupulous over reaching which gave a form and substance to what originally was no more than the desperate conception of a feeble and expiring administration, it is deeply to be lamented that claims of the highest order upon the consideration of American Statesmen, were totally sacrificed.

Mr Buchanan has probably little or no personal knowledge of the Southern parts of this Country, and I think fairly enough of him to believe that if he could witness the shocking increase of the internal Slave trade which Annexation has induced, if he could see hundreds of wretched and innocent persons linked to an ox chain, passing to the Southern Market through what is called a land of freedom, and hundreds more standing day after day exposed for sale, like cattle in the market places, tricked out to catch the eye of criticizing purchasers, their persons arrayed in holiday attire, and their countenances clothed with all the ominous expression of settled grief, and shame, and sullen indignation; I say, I cannot but believe that such a dismal sight, and the reflection it must produce in any commonly generous mind would awake Mr Buchanan's conscience to the fact that there was a worse part, and worse offense in the affairs of Texas, than mine.

Turns in politics are not new to Mr Buchanan, no doubt conscientiously made. Let him assure himself that he could make no more honourable turn, nor more merciful and just to unborn generations, than to repent of the share he has had in this deeply wrongful transaction. Let him strain every effort of his heart and understanding to prevent the old Slave States of this great Confederacy, founded upon the doctrine, true or false, that all men are born equal; from becoming breeding pens of human cattle for the Slave supply of an immense territory, plundered from a Country which had released it from the stain, and misery, and a rottenness that are the sure consequences of the system.

Position and explicable prejudice, joined to the recollection of the elevated characters of some of the chief advocates of this business, relieve them from any suspicion of sordid motive.—Fatally wrong and hasty they have indeed been, but no informed person questions their sincerity, or charges them with purposes of personal advantage. Such considerations cannot be advanced in the case of Mr Buchanan. He is for this worst description of Slave trade, or he is against it. If he is for it, he has acted congruously, but if he is against, his responsibility is as grave as it is possible to conceive.

The calm and deliberate judgment of his Country, and of all the friends of practical human rights awaits Mr Buchanan,—and all the other abettors of this scheme. The passing passions of the hour are with him, but a righteous decision cannot be long averted by fleeting popular excitement, or by the jargon of liberality, or mouthful professions of love for freedom, prefaced to votes and schemes in favour of an immense impulse to the most sordid and cruel oppression extant in Christendom

The Queen's Government know that I have done some things in my humble capacity, for freedom's sake, and suffered some for humanity, and for that sake, and not to satisfy any personal feeling, I make this answer to the light words Mr. Buchanan has spoken of me.

Charles Elliot.

To The Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN²⁰

No. 4.

Houston

January 13th. 1846.

My Lord,

I have the honour to acquaint Your Lordship that I arrived here this Morning on my way to Austin, but met the President going down to Galveston, to which place he has requested me to return with him.

The Messenger from the President of the United States with the Annexation resolutions duly passed and approved by that Legis-

²⁰F. O. Texas, Vol. 16.

lature and Government also arrived here this Morning and I am informed by the President of Texas that the Legislature of the Proposed State will be assembled on the 16th Proximo, when the Government of the Republic will be dissolved.

He observed to me that Your Lordship's despatch No. 17, should be acknowledged by the Secretary of State on his return to this place where he was shortly expected; but he would take occasion to converse with me again upon the subject, at Galveston.

Charles Eliot

To The Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen. K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN²¹

No. 5.

Galveston

January. 15th 1846.

My Lord,

The President conversed with me to day upon the subject of Your Lordship's despatch No 17 of 1845.

Her Majesty's Government might depend that the Treaties would be fully and faithfully executed by the Government of the Republic of Texas to the last moment of it's existence.

And, therefore, as nothing practical could arise during the brief survival of the present institutions of this Country, involving any question under the principles declared in Your Lordship's despatch, he thought that no more would be necessary, or indeed proper on the part of this Government, than a notice that the Communication had been recorded.

It was true that the Congress of the United States had already passed a law extending the revenue system of that Country over Texas, but that law could not go into operation because it was in contravention of the Constitution of the State of Texas, as accepted by the Legislature and Government of the United States. For that instrument provided that the Government and Laws of the Republic of Texas should remain in force, till the State Legislature should be in Session, and the State Government duly inaugurated.

The imposts therefore would be levied on Merchandize and pro-

²¹F. O. Texas, Vol. 16.

duce, whether coming from the United States or any other Country, under the tariff law of the Republic of Texas, till all the Conditions and formalities required by the Constitution of the State of Texas were fulfilled.

The Government of the Republic of Texas had no official means of communicating with the Government of the United States; And it seemed to him that the proper mode of bringing this subject to the knowledge of that Government would be to send a Copy of the despatch with the delegation of the State to the Congress of the United States, when those Gentlemen were duly elected, and went forward to prepare their duties

My own task being limited to the communication of the subject of the despatch, and placing a Copy of it in the hands of this Government, the conversation dropped.

I may mention that importers of goods to Texas from the United States, have been for some time past paying their duties according to the tariff law of the Republic of Texas, under protest, on the plea that the Country is already a Member of the North American Confederacy.

Charles Elliot.

To The Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN²²

No. 6.

Galveston.

January 18th 1846.

My Lord,

I have never observed any publication, official or otherwise, in the papers of this Country shewing the extent and particulars of the popular Vote on independence or Annexation, which the recent Assembly at Austin provided should be taken viva voce; and I made that remark to the President some days since. He said that the particulars had not been published because they had only heard from 20 Counties (there are 36 in the Republic) but so far as he could form a judgement he thought that the whole Vote would be about six thousand

I observed that, that number did not amount to what might safely

²²F. O. Texas, Vol. 16.

be taken to be one half of the whole vote of the Country; for nearly 14,000 persons had voted at the Presidential election in 1844. And yet it seemed strange that the Annexationists did not put forward their whole strength on such an occasion, if it were only to establish that vast preponderance in favour of it which has been so much insisted upon here and in the United States.

It was natural to think that persons in favour of the Measure would take some interest or pride in recording a viva voce Vote in that sense; and it was equally reasonable to suppose all things remembered, that it's opponents would abstain from writing down their names against the absorption of the Country in the North American Confederacy; An opposition which they had been loudly told would only serve to shew the insignificance of their number. The taking of the Vote, viva voce, contrary to the fundamental rule in their system, is of itself a subject of attentive reflection. Such a course was intended to stifle adverse opinion; And Your Lordship will not be surprised to learn that persons against Annexation generally abstained from recording their refusal to sacrifice independence to the plots and exigencies of dominant parties in the United States. Texas was already in the Military occupation of a force at the disposal of those parties, and the friends of independence, abandoned by their leaders, were naturally completely discouraged.

There can be no doubt that the great majority of the vote actually taken was on the side of Annexation, but in my mind it's shortness of what is known to be the full vote of the Country affords some fair index of the extent of opposite opinion; a party quieter than the successful, but certainly not less weighty in point of respectability and good sense.

The President adverted to the Mass Meetings in favour of Annexation held in all parts of the Country some months before the assembly of the body at Austin. They had left no doubt in his mind of the feeling and will of an immense majority of the people. It is to be remarked, however, that what are called Mass Meetings are usually assemblies of persons of one way of crying out, and there is a proneness on such occasions to exaggerate numbers, and intensity of feeling, and every circumstance connected with them.

The general tendency of the people of this part of the world

to excitement and exaggeration, is also always extraordinarily developed in their political heats and the description of their political assemblages and successes. I attach little credit to their own statement on such matters; at all events, exact numbers furnish safer conclusions, and the smallness of the general Vote on this question is most remarkable. The want too, of the official publication of the number of persons actually voting, and the fact that the majority has been deduced from the Vote of 20 Counties only out of 36 (no doubt the most populous in the Republic) are significant circumstances, and may sooner or later be matter of some interest.

The present Government of Texas, fairly disposed I am sure, were effectually prevented from giving one party any time or reasonable chance to recover from their delusion, or to extend to the other even that limited protection which the ballot would have afforded to persons desiring to save the independence of the Country. In fact the whole transaction is the success of an unscrupulous intrigue, set on foot in the United States for certain personal objects, on false pretences, and carried out from beginning to end by all manner of indirect and irregular proceedings

The opinion of very distinguished persons in the United States has strengthened my own belief that the measure is in a high degree dangerous to the integrity of that Confederacy; And when the popular excitement in favour of it has subsided, it may be depended upon that the manner of it's accomplishment will aggravate the angry feeling of which it cannot fail to be productive.

Charles Elliot.

To The Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN²³

No. 7.

Galveston.

January 20th. 1846.

My Lord,

I have the honour to forward to Your Lordship the "National Register" Newspaper of the 29th November last, containing²⁴

²³F. O. Texas, Vol. 16.

²⁴Elliot here lists six of the nine documents already transmitted by Kennedy. (See THE QUARTERLY, XX, 402.)

1st. The proclamation of the President of Texas declaring that the Constitution of the proposed State of Texas adopted by a Convention of Deputies at Austin on the 28th August last, had been Ratified by a Majority of the popular Vote. There has been no proclamation setting forth the popular decision on independence or Annexation, and no publication, official or otherwise, of the amount of the whole Vote on that question, or on the popular ratification of the State Constitution. But I think from the best sources of information within my reach that the whole vote taken is overstated in my despatch No. 6.

2d. The proclamation of the President of Texas directing that Elections be held for the choice of Governor, and Lieut-Governor, and Senators and representatives of the State Legislature.

3d. Copy of a letter from the Honble Anson Jones to the Honble. J. Reily Texian Chargé d’Affaires to the U. S. Jany. 20th 1842.

4th. Copy of a letter (strictly confidential) from General Houston to W. S. Murphy formerly Chargé d’Affaires of the U. S. in Texas. Feby. 3d 1844.

5th. Copy of a letter from General Houston (Confidential) to Mr Van Zandt Chargé d’Affaires of Texas in the U. S. Jany. 29th 1844.

6th. Copy of a Message (Secret) from General Houston, President of Texas, to Congress. Jany. 20th 1844.

I abstain from making any comment upon some of these papers at present; but this is a convenient occasion to state that there is little doubt of the election of General Houston and the present President to the Senate of the United States by the Legislature of the proposed State.

No person is more sensible than myself of the difficulties, indeed of the dangers to which they were exposed. Neither am I ignorant of the influences brought to bear upon one of them, and the prospects held out to him. The degree in which the first moved his private feelings, and the extent to which the last bewildered his judgment may be hard to distinguish. That both causes operated cannot be denied, but that he was acted upon more by his

impulses of attachment for an individual, than by less excuseable motives, I am well assured.²⁵

It is not my purpose however, to dwell upon such topics; but I must remark that the election of these two Gentlemen to the Senate of the United States will be a conclusive answer from Texas to all the false charge respecting British and French intrigue, and undue interference in the Affairs of this Country. They will be sent there not only because it is perfectly known here that those statements have no foundation, but because it will be felt that they have done what they could for the true welfare of the Country, and the leaning they undoubtedly had to the preservation of the independence of the Republic, will not be their worst recommendation to the second thought of this deluded people. The friends of independence will be on their side, and the result of the popular vote on independence or the sacrifice of it, convincingly establishes the existence of a much larger party in Texas, rightly and honourably disposed, than could be inferred from President Polk's recent fanciful statement to the American Congress.²⁶

I take the liberty to express the opinion that this transaction, or the manner of it will not be durably felt in the United States to be a satisfactory subject of national congratulation; and I think it will be judged in sound quarters that the figure of the popular Vote in Texas speaks more accurately and authentically upon the subject, than inflated figures of speech. One of the two probable Senators for Texas has been charged in the Government paper of the United States with guilty participation in foreign intrigue (little short of treason, I believe, was the express language) and the other has been denounced over and over again by a representative of the United States in Texas, as adverse to the connexion with the North American Confederacy, and in secret and treasonable understanding with Mexico, and certain European powers.

Their election under such circumstances is irreconcilable with Mr Polk's imagination of "the almost unanimous voice of the people of Texas" in rebuke of the intrigues of Great Britain and France in this Country— They have administered the affairs of

²⁵That is, Houston's personal attachment to Jackson.

²⁶Polk's first annual message, December 2, 1845, in which he spoke of the "almost unanimous voice" of Texas in favor of annexation.

Texas during the last five years, they have given the flattest contradiction to Mr Polk's charge of improper interference by Great Britain and France in official papers; they have passed unscathed through all the attack and scrutinizing enquiry to which they have been exposed in that sense, and their election to the Senate of the United States will be the rebuke of the people of Texas for that kind of groundless accusation.

The people of Texas are already beginning to awaken from their delusion, and may soon recollect that there was no movement of active interference in their behalf by the Government of the United States when it was most needed, or until Texas was about to settle on an honourable and advantageous footing without it, and particularly, until an approaching Presidential election in the United States made it a convenient subject for speculating politicians to agitate and turn to their own account.

When the people of Texas too, become restored to a sober sense of what is past and gone, it may occur to them that the Agents of Great Britain and France never forget that they were sent to the Government they had chosen, and not to operate upon the passions or prejudices of the unreflecting, or to practice upon leading men in the Country by indirect means, and offers of high place and station, present and prospective.

The President of the United States in his Message closes his reflections on Annexation, with a paragraph, every sentence of which, rightly explained, contains as just a Comment upon the transaction as language could have supplied. "If we consider," says Mr. Polk the "extent of territory involved in the Annexation, it's prospective influence on America, the means by which it has been accomplished, springing purely from the choice of the people to share the blessings of our Union, the history of the world may be challenged to furnish a parallel." The extent of territory involved; that is, territory six times as large as the territory in the occupation of the Texians, belonging to a weak and unoffending Neighbour, and secured to her by treaty. It's prospective influence on America, that is in fact, the prospective influence on America of continued violation of compact, and increasing spoliation by the Government of this Country on feeble Powers.

The means by which it has been accomplished; that is means

which cannot bear the light, but springing, according to this account, purely from the choice of the people themselves to share the blessings of the Union. All idea of freedom of choice by the people themselves is purely imaginary. The circumstances and facts of the case contradict it, and at least two thirds of the people abstained from voting at all, or voted against Annexation. Concerning these conceptions of the blessings of the Union, it seems highly probable that a very large part of the people of the Union will determine in no long lapse of time, that a great impulse to the internal Slave trade, and a vast extension of the principle of Slave representation in the Councils of the Nation, are not blessings to the Union, but danger and shame.

Mr Polk is warranted in his confidence that the history of the world may be challenged to permit a parallell to this affair, or it may be added, to the deliberate composure of his account of it.

Charles Elliot.

To The Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN²⁷

No. 8.

Galveston

Jany. 23d 1846.

My Lord,

I have the honour to forward the Copy of a Circular from the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, extracted from the Union Newspaper of the 8th Instant, which reached this place to day; and I have also to report that the same paper contains the appointment by the President of the United States, by and with the consent of the Senate of Mr Hiram G. Reynolds to be "Collector of the Customs for the district of Texas, and Inspector of the Revenue for the Port of Galveston in the State of Texas."

Your Lordship is aware that the President of Texas considers that the separate Sovereignty of this Republic, and it's Laws and institutions, remain in unimpaired force till the State Legislature shall have assembled, and the State Government has been duly established agreeably to the terms of the Constitution of the proposed State of Texas; the acceptance of which Constitution by the

²⁷F. O. Texas, Vol. 16.

United States in all its details and to its full extent, the President says, formed part of the compact between the two Countries for the Annexation of Texas to the North American Confederacy.

It appears, however, from some recent Laws and appointments in the United States, not merely fiscal, but extending the federal Judiciary system over Texas that in point of principle there is a conflict between the Sovereignities, and Legislatures of the two Countries.

I forward for Your Lordship's examination a Copy of the Constitution of the proposed State,²⁸ begging to observe that I have marked the passage bearing on this subject.

Charles Eliot.

To The Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN²⁹

No. 9.

Galveston.

Jany. 26th. 1846.

My Lord,

I have the honour to acquaint Your Lordship that the President left this place a few days since to return to his plantation on the Brazos, intending to remain there till it is time to proceed to Austin and meet the State Legislature, convened for the 16th Proximo.

In his absence, and that of the Secretary of State from Austin, I have considered myself at liberty to remain where I am, for I am not in good health; though that circumstance should not have prevented me from proceeding to any point where the Government of Texas was residing, and discharging the duty committed to me in Your Lordship's despatch No. 17 of 1845.

Charles Elliot

To The Right Honourable

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

²⁸*The Civilian and Galveston Gazette*, Extra, September 6, 1845.

²⁹F. O. Texas, Vol. 16.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN³⁰

No. 10.

Galveston.
Jany. 26th. 1846.

My Lord,

Taking the liberty to refer Your Lordship to my despatch No. 7. I would beg leave to say a few words upon the contrariety between the language which the late and present Presidents of Texas held to me for communication to Her Majesty's Government, and that which has otherwise found it's way before the public.

Your Lordship is aware that they both frequently assured me they preferred the separate existence and independence of the Country, recognized by Mexico, to it's absorption in the North American Confederacy, and that they have both over and over again as well to me, as in formal public papers, expressed their perfect confidence in the friendly and unconditional support and just purposes of Her Majesty's Government.

General Houston ever since I have known him, has always been more emphatic in the expression of his determined opposition against Annexation than the present President, and more sanguine in his avowed belief that the people of this Country would never sacrifice their independence if it's acknowledgment could be secured from Mexico. Speaking of Mr. Jones I believe that he went as far as he could, to secure a wiser and more honourable turn than affairs had taken.

But it is not to be denied that a time arrived when General Houston was acted upon by influence which succeeded, not indeed in engaging him in any active sense, overtly or otherwise, favour of Annexation, (at least till a very late period, and only after the election of the Deputies had made it certain that the Measure would be carried in Texas, or if not after that period, very close upon it). But those influences effectually succeeded to the extent of keeping him passive and observant throughout a critical state of public feeling in this Country.

What the result might have been if General Houston, supported as he would have been, had decisively interposed at an early stage in favour of independence, I cannot say, and I am aware that his situation was difficult. But at all events it is manifest that

³⁰F. O. Texas, Vol. 16.

by openly and steadfastly adhering from first to last to that choice which he sincerely believed to be for the honour and advantage of the Country he would have gained for himself a high and enduring reputation. If General Houston had said some of the things which I have seen imputed to him in the prints of the United States respecting his public transactions with Great Britain and France, I am concerned for him, and if he has not, as I learn that he denies he has, it must be painful to his friends that there has been no public and direct refutation of reports so wrongful and injurious to him.

In concluding, however, I will take the liberty to say that prominent persons in such a political scheme as this, should always be judged with much allowance for varying language, and seemingly changing conduct of affairs. For it cannot be denied that directness would generally be extremely hazardous to them in moments of crisis, and it must also be remembered that their power to avert mischief is quite incommensurate with their political risks. In fact I have learnt in my experience that irresponsible despotism, as a rule, produces very similar results on persons in high station, whether it be the despotism of a capricious Asiatic Prince, or of multitudes in possession of uncontrolled power, too often taking Council of bad advisers and their own passions, amidst shouts for what is absurd and unjust, and groans for what is wise and right.

The Competitors and enemies of eminent men in either of these cases constantly succeed in casting them into situations in which there is no choice between a complete violation of conscience, or that sacrifice of political prospect. In the first indeed, in addition to the loss of power, there is sometimes loss of life, or chains and banishment, but in some compensation for these occasional cruelties it may be that good councils and justice more frequently resume their sway over a single despot, than over a despotic multitude lashed into a condition of ever recurring excitement and delusion by eager rivals for their suffrages.

It is rather a matter of surprize that there should be so many public men in America constant to common sense and justice, than that there should be many more skilful in catching the turn of

events, and unscrupulous in tergiversation; or still greater numbers, drifting with the popular tide, let it run which way it will.

Charles Elliot.

To The Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN³¹

No. 12.³²

Galveston.

February 1st 1846.

My Lord,

It is currently reported here that the last steam boat from New Orleans with dates from that place of the 27th Ulto. and from Washington of the 17th has brought orders to the force at Corpus Christi to advance forthwith to the Rio Grande. But judging from the very short time that the intelligence of the recent changes³³ in Mexico, and the withdrawal, or the reported withdrawal of Mr. Slidell³⁴ from thence could have been known by the United States Government at our latest dates from Washington, it may be that nothing beyond instructions for early movement have come on as yet: But trust worthy information from Corpus Christi as late as the 23d. Ulto I think the American force in Texas may be nearly stated, as follows.

Infantry about	2,600	} at
Dragoons Do	400	
Horse Artillery Do.....	220	
		Corpus.
		Christi

and two troops of Dragoons detached at San Antonio de Bejar and Austin.

Their field Artillery is reported to consist of 12 Guns, and Six of heavier Calibre mounted as battering Guns on their field defences. The Material and efficiency of this part of the force are

³¹F. O. Texas, Vol. 16.

³²F. O. Texas, 16, Elliot to Aberdeen, No. 11, January 27, 1846, has been omitted. It transmitted printed copies of the Journal of the Texan Convention of 1845.

³³The revolution of Paredes against Herrera.

³⁴Slidell, who was a member of Congress from Louisiana in 1845, was in that year sent to Mexico to "adjust difficulties," but in reality to purchase California if possible. He was unsuccessful.

best spoken of; but their horses as well as those of the Cavalry have the appearance of having suffered severely from bad water and exposure. The people are still under canvass, and I learn that there were about 80 men in the hospitals, and that they have lost rather more than that number by death and the same by desertion. Large proportion of the force are Irish, and Germans and other foreigners; indeed it is said that not more than a fifth of the whole are of American birth.

The swampy condition of the lower Country would prevent them from moving immediately even if the orders have come on, but if the weather should continue fine for 10 days or a fortnight they would be able to do so, and I should add that they have been collecting transport since their arrival in Texas, and I believe have now enough for movement to any points on the lower Rio Grande which they propose to advance upon.

If they do move, the Brassos, San Jago would I conclude be immediately occupied both by troops and by such light armed vessels as could be got into that anchorage. The best water there may be about 8½ feet, but the position would be necessary for their supplies and communications. There is no Naval force of any kind upon this Coast except one revenue schooner; engaged in a survey under the direction of two officers of the Engineer Corps.

Charles Elliot

To The Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen. K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN³⁵

No. 13.

Galveston

February 15th. 1846.

My Lord.

I have the honour to transmit the Copy of a Note from this Government, dated on the 4th Inst.³⁶—and in connexion with the subject of it, I take this occasion to forward to Your Lordship the Copy of a letter of instructions which I have this day addressed

³⁵F. O. Texas, Vol. 16.

³⁶Allen to Elliot, February 4, 1846. In Garrison, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Republic of Texas*, III, 1204, in *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1908, II.

to Consul Kennedy. Thinking it possible that he might publish some notice respecting these matters, (which appears to me to be unnecessary and inexpedient) I have marked the letter "Confidential."

Charles Elliot

To The Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen. K. T.